

**JASPER SPICERO**

NEW GALERIE

Selected Texts

# ARCADIA\_MISSA

## THE INNOCENCE OF BECOMING

by Rózsa Zita Farkas

### 1.

When you've been working on google docs MS Word feels like hiding. Nietzsche's conception of power feels like a sort of hiding, or what we might frame as a radical immanence: an existing within the system. "God is dead" is the tshirt quote, but by this he meant an affirmation of life with no divinely revealed reason or goal, an affirmation of process without telos. The owner of the cafe we're sitting in is walking around with a torch as the electricity has cut out. It's raining, we're not moving, we're lit by our laptop screens in the dark. The predominant strand of Western philosophy before Nietzsche relied on an idea of the transcendental, a godly perspective of viewing the world, or power relationships. Although existing long before google maps and RPGs, Nietzsche intuitively challenged the preexisting Renaissance geometry of the world, arguing there is no "judging, measuring, comparing, or sentencing the whole" of life and nature, for that would imply a position outside of life and nature, which is something impossible for natural, godless creatures such as ourselves. Instead we should try and see the world from inside, structured through not logical and rational relationships but instead a more desirous "will to power". To see the world in this way is to embrace "the innocence of becoming". We wonder when the moment of hiding turns to one of being trapped (We wonder when hiding becomes being trapped?). Or maybe I do but you don't, typing on your own on the other screen: "Nietzsche is yolo". Becoming is an ontological concept opposed to being; if being is standing there, or sitting, then becoming is moving all around it, continually (re)making yourself.

As Nietzsche saw it, this becoming is a form in which one's 'interior force' holds in its hand a powerful potential that stands alone as justified, thus internalised. Power as power, inside itself, impotence. Foucault knew. If Nietzsche's view of power is something like a psychological hypothesis, an instinctive drive in creatures like us that manifests as ambition, then for Foucault power is much more like a three dimensional grid. This power is pervasive, a metastructure that we exist in rather than a force that we ride. Becoming as a form of power translates into this grid – a categorisation of life he termed as biopower.

For Foucault, immanence entails more than an individual ontological state, and is defined instead as the relations we hold between us. There is no such thing as disinterested knowledge or power all are buildings of biopower: bastions and institutions that wholly pave way for the ebbs and flows of agency. Yet as our surroundings are internalised, this immanent potential no longer feels so radical. More just a networked system of gameplay opening outward like a gash and falling down into the water table, invisibly. Becoming is always context. It can't only be from within.

We woke up and people were having dinner in the morning, sitting outside with their beer and lasagne as the sun was getting comfortable in the sky. The smell of last night's dank moments hung in the air and were inadequately swept away with the unravelled sweet wrappers, into a milky canal at the slide round the corner. Drinking knockoff coca cola and alcohol out the taps and everything the wrong way round. End of the stack, only trailing on the surface and mediated through the orange plastic glasses that hung around your neck. It's the end of the world, and the end of the world is the frontier.

The stack is an ominous idea, if we want it to be. The stack is the infrastructure that supports us; the data boards, concrete and oil pipes that gyrate invisibly as our coffee brews; the planetaryscale computation system that provide collective, identitymaking, selfies; peertopeer cultural hierarchies.

We're so at the edge of the stack that the infrastructure isn't working and the interface begins to peel at the edges. The last layer of the stack sprouts end of the world tourism and plastic umbrellas. Like Ballard sold to you in a coca cola can, obviously.

### 2.

MAN (V.O.) Even if the doors are locked I'm not empty. There's a person inside.

LULU (V.O.) It felt as though we were confined to the interior of a hotel with no exits, without even balconies... None of my carefully designed surroundings or daily routines could hasten the end and now... am I only remembered inside this box? Six months inside a hotel, with never a walk outside. Inside it was late summer, and the days were long.

Intriors II is a project by Jasper Spicero, published online in May 2013. It consists of a series of sculptures interlaced by a dramatic script; a screenplay for decentralised screens. Included is also a selfproduced soundtrack. In the work scene is interchangeable with emotion. It is a screenplay not so much set in places but feelings, or one that allows places to become feelings, reciprocally. It's logic for when you've been in a world too long, or stayed up all night scrolling through lists in your head.

Intriors II is a good artwork because it acts as a locus for the objects created in its installation, and understands them not as fragmented or selfcontained, but as existing in a mesh. It understands that these objects are themselves part of a set of relations narratives between persons, things, and situated within different geographies. These are received by the viewer, through the mediated forms constructed in its presentation.

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These mediations expand the artwork into its own reception. It's difficult to know what each object is made of; they oscillate between concrete, metal and plastic filament. These hang in a lattice of affect on the page. The storyline binds them together, yet only imperceptibly.

The text and images sit on a level plane, as one work, to be viewed. The objects aren't relayed to us simply via documentation or presentation, but through your reading of the objects as the script unfolds. The script began in role playing games: a character in ff7 dies but all his items remain in your inventory just greyed out, and that's the relation from which Spicero formed the work. That relation doesn't really matter, it's just another extension of how affect is constructed throughout your interactions. How becoming is made material to your person.

Nominally we ask how we read an art object. Yet by giving us reading Spicero shifts criteria to how we sense the object, how we interweave ourselves in the mesh. What if you didn't see the 'script' tab? What if you spent ages looking at the imageonly page, or what if you only read the script page, and the objects were forever embedded in the story? What device do we experience it on? We know we are being led as we view the work, yet there is always the potential for our reception of the work to take a tangent, for there to be a greater autonomy as we construct the image as we read. That's us, really, forms under biopower with an immanence of sorts, or an immanent perception.

It is this unresolved potential, never quite grasped by the viewer, which shows Intriors II to wholly know the moment of its own becoming, on repeat, refresh button.

**3.** What device are we reading this text on? Life at the edge of the stack unfolds through moments of infrastructure, often rectangles of various sizes. Spicero's work not only sits in these infrastructures, in the open air, but also contains becoming as an aestheticised quality, stretching the clingfilm surrounding the stack and exposing the problem: clingfilm fits like a glove but doesn't let your skin breathe.

For artworks to add to a conversation in this way, they work outwards from contemporary culture, taking the reality of the present as their material grounding. So functions Intriors II, illustrating becoming as it becomes an object of labour; becoming inbuilt with the exchange value of global capital, or everyday life.

Life at the end of the stack is privilege; privilege built on rotting foundations. The predominant political discourse across the mesh is currently one of austerity. Yet austerity as a political response to crisis is redundant: we need to understand the problem as structural, to recognise the crisis as not cyclical but secular. The excesses of late capitalism are built on exploitation and unsustainability. Becoming is a great commodity form, not simply because it fits on one device in our pocket, but because it fits so neatly within a neoliberal framework that allows our immanence to be individualized and deradicalised in its singular subjectivity. We don't need to act, and that is safe, safe at the end of the stack, but not when



we are outside the clingfilm holding it crudely together. Biopower is not a form of dominance and submission, but is itself equivalent to how we constitute systems of power. It is about how we interact through a network of relations both subject and object.

Becoming can't claim innocence. If we are to allow an ontology of becoming in this context, we have to be aware of how we become the context, and how we negotiate ourselves in this context. Foucault's relationship to this is subtle, but nonetheless adept. As he argues in the History of Sexuality, "This biopower was without question an indispensable element in the development of capitalism; the latter would not have been possible without the controlled insertion of bodies into the machinery of production and the adjustment of the phenomena of population to economic processes." In what way he preempted the sorts of power relations inherent in the sociality of our lived experiences is not explicit. Yet what this stresses is the extent to which the body and self become entwined in the machinery of these networked, distributed and often shrouded forms of production.

What we want from becoming has always already happened, inasmuch as we are always becoming; becoming is what materialises the past and future in the present. Our genealogy happens without chronology. Yet chronology still happens without us, and rather than replicate this, or become on the surface with our end of the world coffees, we need to be ripping out its foundations and building new ones. The etymology of radical is "of or having roots", but in a world dominated by rhizomes clearly this becomes everywhere. I need to urge the context to become with me, otherwise I'm not really becoming at all, but just straddling consumption and resilience.

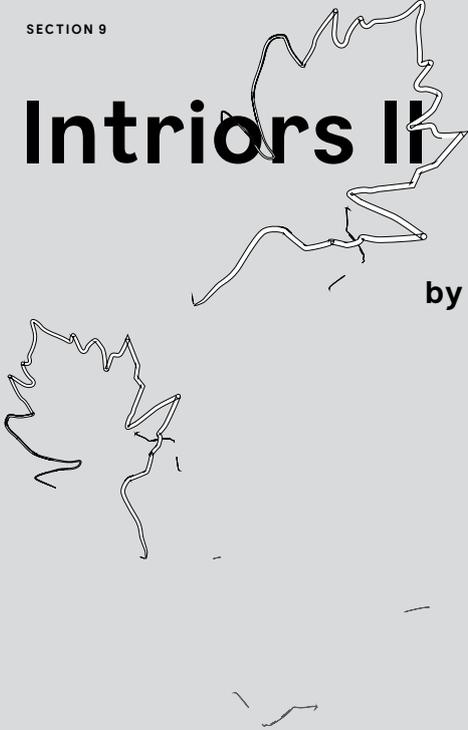
For everything we are writing, and all we have said to each other, what I focus on right now is not hearing the sounds of the slot machines. We sit, finishing each other's sentences without talking. I don't care whether "the people are nice" I retreat into self interaction to avoid any visceral response to my surroundings. It's easier that way. Work hard, play hard, work hard, play hard whines in the background, vying for attention over the slots' cartoon sounds and cascading cash as the guy takes each one sequentially for all its got.

# NERO

SECTION 9

## Intriors II

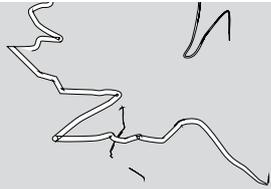
by Jasper Spicero



🎵 To fully enjoy this text, please go to <http://neromagazine.it/intriors> and play the audio file as a soundtrack

Jasper Spicero (1990) was born in South Dakota and received his BFA from the Pacific Northwest College of Art and Design in 2013. His work has been exhibited internationally and through digital platforms, with recent solo shows including *Intriors II* (American Medium, NY) and *Plant Display* (bubblebyte.org). He is the founder and curatorial director of Generation Works gallery in Tacoma, Washington, and organizer of *Open Shape*, a series of three season-specific exhibitions utilizing Kompan playgrounds as a backdrop and showcasing artist-designed 3D-printed objects. He currently lives and works in Brooklyn, New York.

# NERO



OFFLINES

FADE IN:

## EXT. HOUSE - DAY

Falling from an overcast sky. Leaves blowing towards a house. They are changing from green to orange to brown. It is sunny. Snow falls. Then rain. Flowers come and go. The house is two stories, white with a black roof. For a moment the wind subsides and the leaves fall at the front door.

## TITLE OVER: INTRIOIRS II

The leaves rise and continue to change colors. We follow them.

## EXT. SIDE OF THE HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

A windowsill. A perspiring cistern water pump. Three cement stepping stones inlaid with pebble mosaic in the shape of birds.

## EXT. BACKYARD

The blowing leaves fall onto an oval patch of flattened grass in the backyard. As *Inn Theme* ends a man's voice blankets the scene.

### MAN (V.O.)

*Even if the doors are locked I'm not empty.  
There's a person inside.*

CUT TO:

## INT. LIVING ROOM - MORNING

The Man's voice belongs to Gordon, tall, white hair with pale blue eyes, well built and wearing all grey with bare feet. He sits arched over a low oval table scattered with tiny metal parts. His face wet with tears.

### GORDON/MARIA

*A scattered dream that's like a far off memory.  
A far off memory that's like a scattered dream...*

He presses a puff of cotton onto an 18-note music box comb.  
The room darkens slowly to a grey dawn.

## INT. UPSTAIRS BATHROOM - WINTER

Closing in on a five year old boy. He sits with his knees on the toilet seat and elbows on the tank. The boy presses a puff of cotton onto his ear. A woman's voice passes through the room.

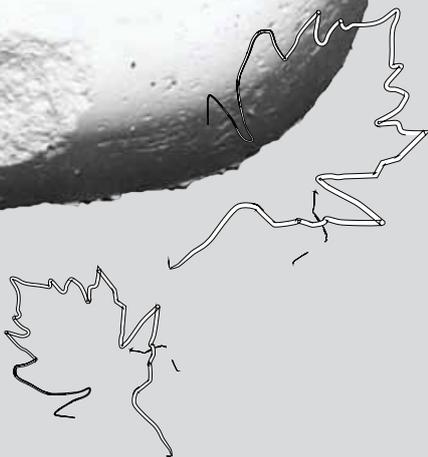
### JULIA (O.S.)

*(out of breath) Ivan...*

Ivan turns his head toward the bathroom window and squints his eyes. From downstairs Gordon speaks loudly.

### GORDON (O.S.)

*I was Gordon I should Cherish my love.*



# NERO

## SECTION 9

### INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

On a countertop at the farthest end of the room is a purple orchid in a white vase. Pale light opens on the flower. Specks of dust appear like pollen in the sun. A moth lands on the orchid.

FADE TO:

### INT. GORDON'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

The door opens for us. At the foot of the bed is a storage container labeled "Lulu." A moth descends onto the lid from above.

CUT TO:

### INT. LAUNDRY ROOM

Baby Blue, a medium sized black, brown and white dog, asleep in a pile of fresh laundry. A mix of solid colors: blue, red, yellow, orange, grey and white. Gordon's hand reaches into the frame to pet Baby Blue.

**GORDON**

*What do you do when you're lost?*

**BABY BLUE**

...

**GORDON**

*You stay still and someone will come and find you.  
You have that memorized?*

Gordon grabs at a piece of grey fabric poking out from beneath Baby Blue's body. He pulls out a knit cap. Baby Blue opens her eyes. One eye is all blue the other is brown with blue dots.

CUT TO:

### INT. IVAN'S BEDROOM

Gordon stands near an unpacked box. There are plastic parts organized on the carpeted floor.

### MONTAGE

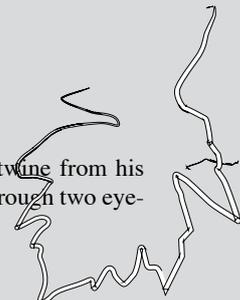
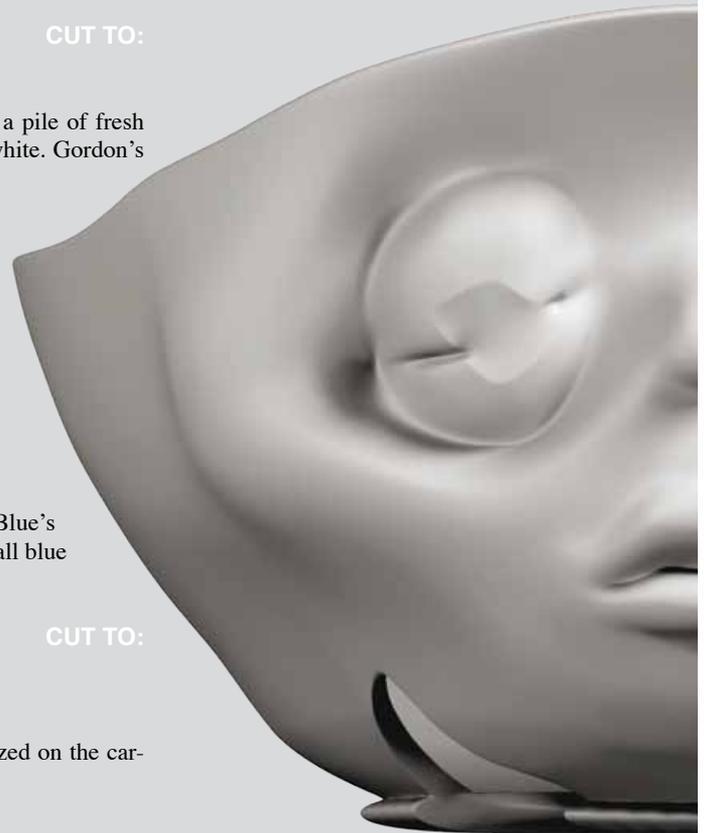
Gordon's hands assembling the mess. Parts fitting together without resistance. His order of operation exact. Pan across his face. Shuts his eyes.

### END MONTAGE

### GORDON'S P.O.V.

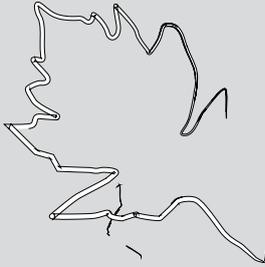
A plastic cubby laying on its back. Gordon pulls a length of dark twine from his pocket. Kneels down. Stands the cubby upright. Threads the twine through two eyelets. Lifts the cubby to the wall at face height.

### BACK TO SCENE



# NERO

OFFLINES



We can't find Gordon. An owl cut out is on the wall.

FADE TO:

## INT. LAUNDRY ROOM - FALL

Ivan stands in front of a convex washing machine door looking at spinning, wet, red and yellow clothes. Gordon enters and kneels to Ivan's height. The green wall panels inside are now flecked with yellow and brown.

### GORDON

*You have accompanied me for a thousand years...*

Gordon looks at Ivan then back to the clothes.

### GORDON

*Do you know what pipes are?*

### IVAN

...

### GORDON

*Houses have pipes, they're, like, tubes and they're behind walls and under floors everywhere and---*

### IVAN

...

### GORDON

*It's okay. They just carry water to and from sinks and bathtubs and toilets and---*

CLOSE IN on the cycle of clothing.

CUT TO:

## INT. KITCHEN - DAY

### MONTAGE

Gordon smashing dishes, mugs and other ceramic kitchenware. Gordon's face screaming. All we can hear is music. The scene is cut rhythmically to the bass hits of *Distant Promise*.

### END MONTAGE

Gordon stands bare foot surrounded by broken ceramic.  
Green dominates the walls and ceiling.

### GORDON (V.O.)

*This puts emphasis on the hero, enduring love and life and death.*

## INT. LAUNDRY ROOM - DAY

Ivan climbs into the washing machine with a load of wet laundry. His face looking out through the convex door.

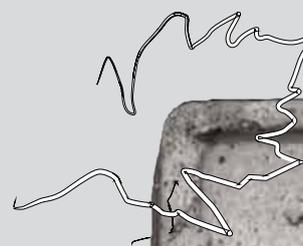
# NERO

SECTION 9

**GORDON (V.O.)**

What goes through my mind when our town runs out of water supply.  
 I hope and pray that it gets normal soon.  
 Then I found solutions.  
 Isolated closed water supply systems.  
 Rooftop rainwater harvesting.  
 Well water. Yet...  
 the washer runs on municipal water. Usually the cycle  
 is weighed down, one way or another,  
 by a body of wet clothes.

Ivan presses an open hand on the glass to flatten a few drops of water. Outside the laundry room window it begins to rain.



CUT TO:

**INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT**

A flying tour of the house.

**IVAN'S BEDROOM**

**JULIA (V.O.)**

*I have lost touch with Gordon...  
 I understand myself least of all. The last time I looked into your eyes  
 it was like looking into the windows  
 of an empty house.*



**GORDON'S ROOM**

**LULU (V.O.)**

*It felt as though we were confined to the interior  
 of a hotel with no exits, without even balconies... None of my carefully  
 designed surroundings or daily routines could hasten  
 the end and now... am I only remembered inside this box?  
 Six months inside a hotel, with never a walk outside.  
 Inside it was late summer, and the days were long.*

**DINING ROOM**

**MARIA (V.O.)**

*A scattered dream that's like a far off memory.  
 A far off memory that's like a scattered dream.  
 I want to line the pieces up...*

**LIVING ROOM**

**IVAN**

...

**KITCHEN**

**GORDON**

...



# NERO

OFFLINES

## INT. GORDON'S BEDROOM - DAWN

Clammy, pale, exhausted Gordon lies shirtless in bed. His torso sticks out from under the down covers. His knit cap slipping off his head.

### GORDON

*I don't even know how long she's been gone.  
It's like I've woken up in bed and she's not here because  
she's gone to the bathroom or something--*

## INT. HALLWAY

### GORDON (O.S.)

*---but somehow I just know she's never gonna  
come back to bed.*

Sleepy Ivan sits with his back against the wall. Hearing the sound of Gordon's voice his eyes widen. He stands and walks towards Gordon's bedroom.  
The ceiling is painted a gray-blue like the winter sky.

## INT. GORDON'S BEDROOM

Ivan enters and stands beside Gordon's bed. He watches the palm of Gordon's hand.

### GORDON

*If I could just reach over and touch her side of the bed I'd know  
that it was cold but I can't. I know I can't have her back  
but I don't want to wake up in the morning thinking she's still here.  
I'll lie here not knowing how long I've been alone. So how...  
how can I heal? How am I supposed to heal if I can't feel time?*

Ivan places his hand in the center of Gordon's, flattening a few drops of sweat. Gordon closes his eyes. His body turns grey like stone.

CUT TO:

## INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

In the living room only a low, oval table remains. The walls are painted dark blue. Ivan enters with his eyes fixed beyond the sliding glass door on a white, brown, and black puff sleeping in the yard. Blankets of snow cover the ground. Ivan stands close to the glass with bare feet. The room darkens slowly to a grey dawn.

## EXT. BACKYARD

Baby Blue curled up in the snow. Her face turned away from Ivan. Her eyes are wide open. Her torso sinks and rises slightly.

### JULIA (V.O.)

My senses dim and this world grows dark.

FADE TO WHITE

Underlined text - Red Mars by Kim Stanley Robinson